DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 202 616 RC 012 697

AUTHOR Churchman, David; Guyette, Susan
TITLE Evaluating American Indian Programs: An Ethnographic Approach.
PUB DATE 13 Apr 81
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Los Angeles, CA, April 13-17, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; American Indians; *Cultural Context; Data Analysis; Data Collection; Elementary Secondary Education; *Ethnography; *Evaluation Methods; Program Evaluation; *Relevance (Education); *Summative Evaluation

ABSTRACT

Traditional methods of ethnographic data collection and analysis can be adapted to conducting summative evaluations of educational programs, particularly those for American Indians. Such evaluations can be approached from a micro-ethnographic standpoint (in which the school alone is studied as a subculture) or a macro-ethnographic standpoint (in which the school is studied as part of the culture as a whole). While each approach has advantages, the macro-ethnographic approach is better suited to non-Western cultures and American Indian cultures in particular, because it can be used to discover discrepancies between the educational goals of the community and the actualities of the schools. Ethnographic evaluation methods are essentially the same for each approach. In an iterative rather than sequential process, data are collected via interviews (using descriptive, structural, and contrastive questions) and participant observation (to determine the places, actors, and activities of the program), and analyzed to determine its domains and taxonomy. Ethnographic summative evaluation is advantageous because it eliminates the evaluator's cultural values; it needs no control group or culturally biased achievement testing; it needs no statistical analysis; its reports are more useful; and it facilitates the study of the cultural appropriateness of the program. (SB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Rec. 21-05-81

Paper presented at the 1981 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, California, 13-17 April.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

David Churchman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED202616

EVALUATING AMERICAN INDIAN PROGRAMS: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

David Churchman (California State University, Dominguez Hills)
Susan Guyette (University of California, Los Angeles)

The ethnographic method is particularly valuable for examining a program or process in cultural context. Activities are considered in relation to sets of activities in a culture and according to the world view of the participants. Due to the holistic nature of Indian cultures, cultural subsystems (economics, political structure, kinship, education, religion, etc.) cannot be considered in isolation, but rather as highly interrelated. The ethnographic approach offers a framework for the study of Indian cultures in a holistic manner. Since the cultural purpose of education is to enculturate the learner to become a productive member of the learner's society, the goals of the Indian community and the Indian learner are inextricably linked. It is the purpose of this paper to present two models for conducting the ethnographic summative evaluation.

One of the fundamental distinctions made by evaluators is that between formative and summative evaluation (Scriven, 1967). The purpose of the former is improvement of educational programs; that of the latter is certification, validation or overall judgement leading to decisions such as whether or not to adopt the program. The most common way of carrying out a summative evaluation is to compare it with another statistically, after measuring the extent to which each accomplishes previously specified objectives.

Evaluators have pointed to a number of technical difficulties

RC 012697

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

with the experimental approach to conducting summative evaluations. Random assignment frequently is impossible in school settings. Objectives of treatment and control programs frequently are not comparable; consequently tests used to collect achievement data often favor one program. The comparison group provides no more than an arbitrary standard. Insufficient attention is given to verifying the extent to which the program syllabus was adhered to, leaving ambiguous exactly what must be done to achieve the same effects again. Halo effects, Hawthorne effects and contamination of the experimental program by the control program and vice-versa frequently complicate interpretation of results. Finally, the reporting of results statistically, with numbers usually reported to two decimal points, gives many readers an exaggerated impression of the accuracy and objectivity of the method. In a word, the experimental approach is simplistic in its view of education, subtly biased by any difficulties encountered in carrying out the approach under real world conditions and in effect an elaborate appeal to authority.

More important perhaps than these technical difficulties, the administrators for whom these evaluations are done often are dissatisfied with the results. First, the experimental design requires pre-specification of what is to be measured and how, with the problem defined before the data are collected. Results vary from excellent if the problem is defined correctly to inappropriate if the important questions are not addressed. Most important, the approach is too narrowly conceived to answer the wide range of questions that must be taken into account in judging a program. Second, experimental approaches seldom can be carried out without disruption of regular schedules and very careful and often complicated administrative arrangements.

The question of relative costs seldom are addressed. Administrative requirements in implementing and running the program are not taken into account. Third, the relationship of the new program to other elements of the curriculum, both horizontally and vertically, are not considered. The small differences in learning between programs which evaluators typically discover seldom are sufficient to demonstrate that one program is better than the other. Finally, in view of the relative unimportance of the questions answered compared with those left unanswered, the high cost of conducting such evaluations seems unwarranted to administrators.

Difficulties such as these with experimental and quasi-experimental methods for conducting evaluations are among the reasons many have argued that broader, richer methods must be used instead. Among the many that have been suggested is ethnography, which uses a wide range of both quantitative and qualitative methods. In this paper, we will limit our attention to qualitative ones because we wish to emphasize the contrast between ethnography and experimental methods. There are, however, some fundamental differences between ethnography and evaluation that should be understood before attempting to adapt the methods of the former to the purposes of the latter.

Differences Between Ethnography and Evaluation

The most important of these differences is in determining the problem that is addressed by the researcher. Ethnographers are interested in culture, which changes slowly; evaluators address policy questions that typically require answers without delay. Ethnographers, under little or no time pressure, typically allow the issues to be studied to emerge over relatively long periods

of time. Evaluators not only work to specific short-term deadlines, but must address questions raised by someone else. Thus, ethnographers expect to learn the nuances and meanings of a cultural system after years spent gaining rapport with people in the culture being studied. Evaluators get in, get the best information they can and get out quickly. Ethnographers are process-oriented, while evaluators concentrate on outcomes.

One consequence of these differences is that ethnographers often feel that their science is being prostituted by evaluators who are using their techniques in new ways for new purposes. But, man has a long history of modifying existing tools to achieve new purposes. Adapting ethnographic methods to evaluation studies requires selection of the relevant elements of traditional ethnographic methods and ignoring others not relevant to evaluation tasks. The plethora of names such as "survey ethnography" and "contract ethnography" may represent recognition that adaptation rather than adoption is taking place.

In this view, the fundamental question is whether the traditional methods of ethnographic data collection and analysis can be adapted to conducting a summative evaluation that better meets the needs of a program administrator than does the more common experimental method. Traditionally, ethnographers make inferences from what people say, what people do and what people use. They rely on two basic tools, interview and observation. The former differs from the interview used by most social scientists primarily in its avoidance of social science terminology in favor of an effort to collect and classify information in native terms. The latter differs from the observation conducted by most social scientists primarily in its

high degree of participation in the activities of those being observed. They thus are distinguished by the terms "ethnographic interview" and "participant observation".

Two Approaches to Ethnographic Summative Evaluation

The micro- ethnographic evaluation limits the scope of the study to the school. Supporters of this approach (Wilson 1977) view the school as a subculture, utilizing ethnographic methods to analyze and interpret activities according to the participant's reality. The resulting product of this evaluation is generally an ethnography describing the program activities, who interacted with whom, and the participants' interpretations. The product may address the question, "Did the program accomplish its goals?" by discovering the goals within the school, considered as a closed system. One common accomplishment of the school ethnography is the possible discovery of discrepancies between the ideal or stated behavior and the real, or actual behavior as reflected in activities. Through ethnographic interview within the school, it is possible to ask participants if activities in the school are connected to elements of the culture as a whole. This data is limited, however, to the perception of a small number of participants.

In contrast, the macro-approach to ethnographic evaluation considers school interaction as interrelated with other cultural subsystems (Wolcott 1975; Everhart 1975). In other words, the school is not viewed as a closed system, but rather as a part of the culture as a whole. This approach takes into account the process of enculturation, whereby the transmission of that

cultural knowledge shared by the community occurs as part of the curriculum. There are three major steps to conducting the macro analysis. First, a study is conducted to determine how each of the cultural subsystems work in the community. This involves observing, participating, and interviewing to identify activities. The cultural meaning of activities is identified according to the methodology described below, and domains of interaction are identified for the culture. Second, a domain analysis is conducted with data obtained from activities within the school. And thirdly, the final analysis compares the domains and world view of the culture-at-large with the transmission of knowledge in the school. Similarities and differences are then identified through this comparison. When disjunctions exist, the more common consequence is community opinion that the school does not reflect the social processes of the culture.

Advantages of the micro-approach over the macro-approach include lowered costs, reduced time, and narrowly defined boundaries. Disadvantages of the micro-approach are that the study is more likely to be biased by the goals set by the educators and the scope of the study is limited. The major, and extremely important, advantage of the macro-approach is the discovery of discrepancies between the educational goals of the community and the actual activities within the school. For this reason, the macro-approach is more suitable to non-Western and American Indian cultures in particular. Where time and funds may pose constraints upon the macro-approach, existing ethnographies can supplement ethnographic fieldwork in the culture-at-large. Additional valuable resources for the study of American Indian cultures are linguistic and ethno-linguistic

studies that describe meta-linguistic categories, language structure, and world view.

There is an important advantage of the macro-approach over the micro-approach that should be considered. With the micro-approach, if the school is studied as a subculture, then connections to the culture-at-large are minimal. In the macro-approach, when the culture is examined first, followed by an analysis of the activities in the school, two types of information are discovered. It is possible to see if there are no connections between activities in the culture and the activities in the schools, as well as if the activities in the schools do not connect to the culture. This information gives a basis for determining if items need to be added to the curriculum to reflect needed cultural learning, or if there are items in the curriculum that need to be deleted. The purposes of the evaluation, advantages, and disadvantages of each approach should be weighed in deciding upon the more appropriate ethnographic evaluation.

The following methods for ethnographic evaluation apply to either the micro- or the macro- approach. For the macro-approach, the domain analysis would be first conducted in the culture-at-large and then within the school; whereas, the domain analysis would be conducted only within the school for the micro-approach. The steps for analysis are basically the same, with more comparison utilized in the macro-approach.

Methods for the Ethnographic Summative Evaluation

A summative evaluation that will meet the information needs of an educational administrator will provide answers to evaluation questions[1] such as :

* What work is done in the program being evaluated--that is, how do students and teachers actually spend their time?

* How is "individualized instruction" experienced by students? (versus how well does individualized instruction work?)

* How do the various types of work done in the program relate to one another?

* What are the major stages through which the program moves, and what work is done within each stage?

* How is achievement measured or identified and what status or rewards does it provide?

* How is the program administered or controlled?

* How do the activities in the program relate to the cultural activities in the community?

As the questions asked during any evaluation will depend on the decisions that have to be made, this list is illustrative, suggestive and incomplete. The task of the evaluator is to help define the necessary questions, then to collect the necessary information and to analyze it The actual decisions are necessarily the task of the administrator. This is consistent with definitions that view the evaluator as a collector, analyzer and interpreter of information, and recognize that the authority for decisions must remain with the administrator who is responsible for the program (e.g. Alkin, 1969).

Thus, an ethnographic summative evaluation will be based on

data collected through ethnographic interviews and by participant observation. It will consist of interpretations of interrelationships among program activities and will be based on the language of teachers and students rather than that of social scientists. The interpretations probably will emphasize description of program progress and structure rather than how much course content has been absorbed by students or what their attitudes care toward the subject.

Methodologically, ethnographic summative evaluation involves ethnographic interviews and participant observation to reach interpretation of structure. The relationship between interviews and analysis is iterative rather than sequential (another characteristic that distinguishes the method from much social science research), and is based on three major types of interview question, types of observation, and three types of analysis. Unlike the experimental approach, it does not require a control group.

Interview Questions

The distinguishing characteristic of ethnographic interviews is the effort to discover questions that should be asked and the phrasing which they should be used. There are two main ways to discover the initial questions to ask. The first is to listen to and record the questions people who are part of the program or society ask of one another about the activities. The second is to inquire directly of some participants as to the types of questions they ask one another.

The first of three major types of interview questions are

descriptive. These should be carefully phrased to avoid reflecting the evaluator's view of the program. "Could you describe a typical day (or hour, class period, etc)"? or "Could you describe what happened yesterday (last hour, last period, etc.)" both permit informants to use their own language and their own categories. Both are likely to give the evaluator a general picture of the program from the respondents' perspectives and to introduce the vocabulary they use among themselves. Both can lead to more detailed questions about anything described, and permit the evaluator very quickly to begin asking questions using the respondent's language. As some respondents use different language when talking to outsiders, it is a wise precaution to suggest that each one answer questions as if the evaluator were some specific person in the culture, perhaps a new student or a substitute teacher. This not only will help the respondent to avoid using artificial language but also may provide clues to the social structure developing in the program.

The second of three major types of interview questions are structural. The major purposes of structural questions is to identify the full range of program terms and their interrelationships. Structural questions often must include an explanation or a context so that respondents fully understand what is desired; further they must be repeated to elicit all possible terms. To identify the full range of terms, questions such as "Are there different kinds of (term learned from the descriptive questions)? are raised. To determine relationships among terms, a variety of strategies are available. A standard form would ask "Is _____ a kind of _____(again, using terms learned earlier)?" or "Would a teacher (student,

aide, etc.) call a _____ a kind of _____ (still using terms learned earlier)?" A good way to get at whether things are or are not related is to write each term that has been learned on a separate 3"x5" card and to ask respondents to make as many separate piles of cards as they wish based on terms that have something in common with one another, then to ask what the cards in each pile have in common. This process can be repeated to learn the full range of ways in which respondents classify the same terms.

The third major type of interview question seeks out contrast rather than similarities. Again, care must be taken not to impose the evaluator's classification schemes on the respondents. Therefore the process may be begun by asking respondents to identify any differences between terms without the evaluator knowing whether or not there are any. If the number of terms is large, it may be wise to present the respondent with three terms at a time, and ask which one is the most different from the other two and on what basis. This is effective because the respondent has to select the organizing principle. An extension of this is to have the informant sort the entire pile of cards into two or more piles in terms of similarities, and then to have the informant explain the rationale for the sorting. Finally, to confirm the distinctions being made, informants can be asked to sort the cards into two piles based on a single specific distinction that has been discovered.

Participant Observation

What people <u>say</u> they do and what they <u>actually</u> do often are

quite different; even if this is not the case, people may not tell an evaluator everything they do, either intentionally or simply because they do not think much of what they do would be of any interest. Participant observation is necessary to complete the record.

Every social situation can be identified by three primary elements: a place, the actors and the activities. In conducting participant observation, the evaluator will select a place; determine who the actors are, watch and become involved with them to some degree; and determine what their activities are. The evaluator will find that one "place" (e.g. the classroom) consists of several distinct settings (e.g. a science table, a corner reserved for use of tape recorders, student desks and the teacher's supply closet). Some activities may seem independent of a specific place (e.g. reading in the reference corner, at a student's desk, or in the library). Some activities may seem independent of specific groups (e.g. all students might use the tape recorder at one time or another). Some activities require combinations of the three. That is, a certain group of people in a certain place may be together often although their activities often change, or a certain activity may always take place in a certain place regardless of the group involved. Finally, while the actors in an educational setting usually (but not always) will include students and a teacher, there may be additional actors (e.g. aides, parents, supervisors, specialists) all or some of the time.

The first task is to determine the "place" or "places" in which the program being evaluated occurs, with the aid of the program staff. This may seem obvious at first, but many activities of many educational programs extend far beyond the

classroom. Perhaps the most obvious example is the library. Programs that require homework of students suggest another area -- and one more difficult if not impossible to observe. Students may not only work alone but also may work in groups, and they may discuss the program being evaluated at any time. Some programs may occur in several settings. For example, locker room, showers, playing at fields, regular classrooms, at "home" and "away" and the coach's office all may be places in which basketball programs occur. Observations will have to be made in as many places in which the program occurs as possible. Practical limitations include both access to the place and the total amount of time available to conduct the evaluation.

The second task is to determine the level of participation the observer will have in the situation. The educational evaluator must consider how to become involved and to what extent. The possibilities vary from unobtrusive observation (observation without knowledge of participants) through nonparticipation (observation with knowledge of participants but without any participation in activities) through complete involvement (selecting a specific role and doing everything that role requires). Roles that might be selected for complete involvement vary from teacher and aide to student. Obviously, a major factor in making the selection will be the similarity of the evaluator in age, sex, ethnicity and other relevant demographic characteristics to the regular program participants. Other factors, such as physical condition in the case of evaluation of the basketball program, may be relevant in particular situations.

The third task is to determine how observations will be recorded. The requirements are to be as concrete and complete

as possible, and to use the terminology of the participants rather than those of the social scientists as much as possible. Ability to achieve these requirements depends largely on the length of the observation session, previous experience with the specific type of program being evaluated and previous experience as a participant observer as these factors largely determine the likelihood of noticing and remembering observations until they can be recorded. Therefore, the less the experience of the evaluator with fieldwork, the less the experience with the particular type of program being evaluated, and the length of time after observations take place before they can be recorded, the less involved the evaluator should become in the program.

The fourth task is to decide what to observe each time. There are at least nine choices: specific space, actors, activities, objects, acts, events, time, goals or feelings. The tendency is for initial observations to be very general, but the evaluator increasingly should define specific purposes from among these nine as knowledge of the program grows. Another possibility is to concentrate on interactions among the nine, although simultaneous observation of more than two becomes unwieldy. Figure 1 provides a complete set of questions to guide observation of two way interactions among the nine.

	SPACE	OBJECT	ACT	ACTIVITY	EVENT	TIME	ACTOR	GOAL	FEELING
SPACE	Can you describe in detail all the *places*?	What are all the ways space is organized by objects?	What are all the ways space is organized by acts?	What are all the ways space is organized by activities?	What are all the ways space is organized by events?	What spatial changes occur over time?	What are all the ways space is used by actors?	What are all the ways space is related to goals?	What places are associated with feelings?
OBJECT	Where are objects located?	Can you describe in detail all the *objects*?	What are all the ways objects are used in acts?	What are all the ways objects are used in activities?	What are all the ways that objects are used in events?	How are objects used at different times?	What are all the ways objects are used by actors?	How are objects used in seeking goals?	What are all the ways objects evoke feelings?
ACT	Where do acts occur?	How do acts incorporate the use of objects?	Can you describe in detail all the *acts*?	How are acts a part of activities?	How are acts a part of events?	How do acts vary over time?	What are the ways acts are performed by actors?	What are all the ways acts are related to goals?	What are all the ways acts are linked to feelings?
ACTIVITY	What are all the places activities occur?	What are all the ways activities incorporate objects?	What are all the ways activities incorporate acts?	Can you describe in detail all the *activities*?	What are all the ways activities are part of events?	How do activities vary at different times?	What are all the ways activities involve actors?	What are all the ways activities involve goals?	How do activities involve feelings?
EVENT	What are all the places events occur?	What are all the ways events incorporate objects?	What are all the ways events incorporate acts?	What are all the ways events incorporate activities?	Can you describe in detail all the *events*?	How do events occur over time? Is there any sequencing?	How do events involve the various actors?	How are events related to goals?	How do events involve feelings?
TIME	Where do time periods occur?	What are all the ways time affects objects?	How do acts fall into time periods?	How do activities fall into time periods?	How do events fall into time periods?	Can you describe in detail all the *time periods*?	When are all the times actors are "on stage"?	How are goals related to time periods?	When are feelings evoked?
ACTOR	Where do actors place themselves?	What are all the ways actors use objects?	What are all the ways actors use acts?	How are actors involved in activities?	How are actors involved in events?	How do actors change over time or at different times?	Can you describe in detail all the *actors*?	Which actors are linked to which goals?	What are the feelings experienced by actors?
GOAL	Where are goals sought and achieved?	What are all the ways goals involve use of objects?	What are all the ways goals involve acts?	What activities are goal seeking or linked to goals?	What are all the ways events are linked to goals?	Which goals are scheduled for which times?	How do the various goals affect the various actors?	Can you describe in detail all the goals?	What are all the ways goals evoke feelings?
FEELING	Where do the various feeling states occur?	What feelings lead to the use of what objects?	What are all the ways feelings affect acts?	What are all the ways feelings affect activities?	What are all the ways feelings affect events?	How are feelings related to various time periods?	What are all the ways feelings involve actors?	What are the ways feelings influence goals?	Can you describe in detail all the *feelings*?

Figure 1 Descriptive Question Matrix

(Spradley 1980)

Data Collection

Collection of data for ethnographic evaluations depends on interviews and participant observation. These methods are neither independent nor sequential. Rather, they should enrich one another in two important ways. First, the evaluator will ask better questions during interviews for having conducted observations, and will be more alert and understanding during observations for having conducted interviews. Second, neither method alone provides complete understanding of what actually occurs in a program, who is involved in a program, or what takes place and what activities mean to participants in a program. It is not particularly important which is done first because both methods will be used often, but both interviews and observations must take place to conduct a complete evaluation. Both must adhere as closely as possible to the goal of description of the program in participant rather than social science terminology if the evaluation is to make any claim to being ethnographic in its methodology.

Analysis of Interviews & Observations

The descriptive data collected by interviews and observation must be analyzed to determine the underlying meaning the educational settings have for the participants. The first task is to identify the activities contained in the data. That is, what constitutes separate activities in the minds of the participants involved must be distinguished from one another. The second task is to discover the relationships within the activities. That is, for each activity, such questions as the the way people transmit or learn their culture through the

activity must be distinguished.

Any activity that includes at least two or more other activities is termed a domain, and it is known by some cover term. There always is a single semantic relationship between the cover term and the included activities, and there is a boundary that distinguishes the cover term and its included activities from other cover terms and their included activities. The first analytical task fo the evaluator is to identify all the domains that comprise the program. This requires five steps. The first step is to select a sample of verbatim notes from an interview. The second step is to look for the names of things mentioned by the informant. The third step is to determine which of these names might cover terms --- that is, terms that describe two or more things (because the evaluator often will be unsure, this process generates additional interview questions). The fourth step is to read through additional interviews to test the hypothesized domains. The fifth step is to determine the semantic relationships among the terms. Spradley (1979) has suggested nine categories into which most semantic relationships will fall, and which are useful in beginning such an analysis (See Figure 2)

Figure 2 Semantic Relationships for the Analysis of Domains

1. Strict inclusion	X is a kind of Y
2. Spatial	X is a place in Y, X is a part of Y
3. Cause-effect	X is a result of Y, X is a cause of Y
4. Rationale	X is a reason for doing Y
5. Location for action	X is a place for doing Y
6. Function	X is used for Y
7. Means-end	X is a way to do Y
8. Sequence	X is a step (stage) in Y
9. Attribution	X is an attribute (characteristic) of Y

(Spradley 1979:111)

The domain analysis is completed by selecting a single semantic relationship (beginning with those in Figure 2), and searching a sample of informant statements for possible cover and included terms linked by the selected semantic relationship. The process is repeated until the data has been fully utilized. These relationships should assist the evaluator to develop structural questions for each domain (see above). These lead in turn to a taaxonomic analysis, which shifts the emphasis from merely identifying the domains to understanding their internal structure. The first of the four steps in completing a taxonomic analysis is selection of a single domain for analysis. The second step is to identify the semantic relationship that organizes the included terms into subsets. The third step is to search for possible subsets among the included terms. The fourth step is to search for larger, more inclusive domains that might include as a subset the one with which you began. Finally, the fifth step is to correlate the program domains with domains of interaction in the program culture. Repetition of this five step process eventually will exhaust all the domains that have been discovered and permit construction of a tentative taxonomy. This can be portrayed conveniently either in an outline, a path diagram or a box diagram depending on personal

preference and the eventual audience for the report.

It should now be apparent that the types of interview questions suggested above (descriptive, structural and contrast) are not arbitrary, but are required by the types of analysis conducted (domain, taxonomic), and that the relationship among all the parts is iterative rather than sequential. The analysis often provides information necessary to make the questions specific and appropriate, while the interviews provide the information necessary to understand the program as it is viewed by participants.

Summary

An ethnographic summative evaluation adapts the data collection and analytical methods of the ethnographer to the purpose of decision-making. The two most important of these adaptations are advance specification of the questions to be addressed and specific, usually eminent, deadlines that preclude the development of rapport usually desired by ethnographers. Such a summative evaluation remains faithful to the traditions of ethnography in attempting to understand educational programs from the viewpoint of the participants. Thus, one advantage of taking the ethnographic approach is in eliminating the cultural baggage, or the values that the evaluator carries with him into the cultural setting. These values can introduce bias into the formulation of the evaluation questions or into the final recommendations. The approach presented is therefore particularly appropriate in explaining programs for minorities within any culture.

The ethnographic approach has the second advantage of not requiring a control group. Judgements can be reached without having to set up or explain to parents why children are receiving different programs, or in situations where the total number of students does not permit such division. If the purely qualitative methods we have suggested are the only ones used, the judgement must be made without the achievement data characteristic of most evaluations. This may be a weakness. First, previous work suggests that one can estimate program effects just as well from time on task as from tests. Second, testing poses special problems of cultural bias particularly for Indian students. Third, the statistically significant results reported from control-group evaluations often seem too small to be educationally significant, so have little impact on the overall judgement made about a program. Given the small number of programs present in most American Indian communities, the possibility of even obtaining a comparable control group is unlikely.

A third advantage of the qualitative ethnographic approach we have suggested is that it does not require the often esoteric statistical methods. The result is an evaluation report that the administrator who seldom understands these methods does not have to take on faith. Thus, the reports themselves are more useful to the people for whom they are intended.

A fourth advantage of the ethnographic approach is that the activities and views of the culture-at-large are linked to the activities within the school. This enables the discoveries of linkages and disjunctions in the educational process, providing direction for revision of curriculum content. The cultural appropriateness of the educational program is assessed through

use of the macro-ethnographic evaluation.

It appears then that ethnographic methods may be useful for the task of conducting summative evaluations. They are particularly suitable when a comprehensive understanding of the program and its relationship to society is the most important factor in judging program quality, as opposed to such other bases as cost or cognitive achievement. But, the decision-making purpose of evaluative research requires adaptation rather than adoption of traditional ethnographic methods.

NOTES

[1]"Evaluation questions" define the purpose of the study; "interview questions" are asked of participants selected from the program being evaluated.

REFERENCES

Alkin M.C. "Evaluation Theory Development", Evaluation Comment, 1969, 2(1), pp. 2-7.

Everhart, R. B. "Problems of Doing Fieldwork in Educational Evaluation", Human Organization, 1975, 34(2), pp. 205-215.

Scriven, M. "The Methodology of Evaluation", in Perspectives of Curriculum Evaluation, Eds. R.W. Tylor, R.M. Gange, and M. Scriven, (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1967).

Spradley, J.P. The Ethnographic Interview (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979).

_____ Participant Observation (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1980).

Wilson, S. "The Use of Ethnographic Methods in Educational Evaluation", Human Organization, 1977, 36(2), pp. 200-203.

Wolcott, H. "Criteria for an Ethnographic Approach to Research in Schools," Human Organization, 1975, 34(2), pp. 111-127.